

# PROGRESSIONS

Issue 1

Winter 2003

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

January 13  
6-8 p.m.  
Alvin Community College  
Nolan Ryan Center  
2925 South Bypass 35  
Alvin, Texas

January 14  
6-8 p.m.  
Hilton Houston – Hobby Airport  
8181 Airport Blvd.  
Houston, Texas

## INSIDE

- Environmental Impact Statement
- Steering Committee
- Public Involvement
- Corridor Study Map

### INTRODUCTION

The Houston District of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is conducting a Major Corridor Feasibility Study (MCFS) for an approximate 47-mile segment of SH 35, located in Harris and Brazoria Counties, from IH 45 in downtown Houston to SH 288 in the City of Angleton. Cities and communities along the corridor include Houston, Brookside Village, Pearland, Alvin, and Angleton. The study is expected to conclude in March 2005.

### WHY STUDY SH 35?

As the Houston metropolitan area continues to grow and develop outward, mobility is a constant challenge. During the past several years, cities along the SH 35 corridor such as Pearland, Alvin, and Angleton have experienced record growth. Because of this, TxDOT is evaluating the current capacity of the existing roadway and possible ways that mobility and safety along the corridor can be improved. The efficiency of the corridor is vital, not only to its current residents, businesses, and travelers, but also to the continued growth of the area.

In addition to studying SH 35, TxDOT is concurrently conducting a similar examination of the SH 288 corridor, another major travel artery for this area.

### STUDY TEAM

TxDOT-Houston has contracted a team of professional engineering, environmental, and public involvement consultants to perform the study. Team members include:

**URS Corporation** – Prime consultant. Project oversight, engineering, and environmental analysis

**AIA Engineering** – Hydraulic and hydrologic evaluation

**Gunda Corporation** – Traffic/transportation analysis

**Martinez Corporation** – Aerial mapping

**The Lentz Group** – Public involvement

### STUDY PROCESS

This study consists of three major phases: Phase 1 – Gather data and identify needs; Phase 2 – Identify and evaluate transportation alternatives; and Phase 3 – Select a recommended preferred alternative. During each phase, the study team will hold public meetings to involve you in the decision-making process.

*The efficiency of the corridor is vital, not only to its current residents, businesses, and travelers, but to the continued growth of the area.*

During the initial phase, the study team will gather and examine all data pertaining to the corridor – including traffic numbers, population and growth forecasts, and environmental constraints – to determine the needs of the corridor and set goals and objectives for the study.

Based on these data, the team will identify all possible transportation alternatives for the area, known as the “universe” of alternatives. These will include transit options such as rail, bus service, and HOV lanes as well as roadway improvements. The alternatives will be evaluated to determine feasibility and the list will be narrowed to the most viable alternatives. The short-listed alternatives will include several build alternatives as well as such no-build options as transportation system

management and travel demand management (TSM/TDM) improvements.

After the short-listed alternatives are defined, they will be evaluated in further detail and ranked based on criteria such as social, economic, environmental, and hydraulic impacts; the effectiveness and cost-benefit of alternatives; and abilities to attain local, State, and national goals. The best performing alternative will become the Recommended Preferred Alternative and a final report documenting the study results will be produced.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), enacted in 1969, requires that all environmental consequences be considered before government policy decisions are made and that actions are taken to protect, restore, and enhance the environment. As part of complying with NEPA, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – a detailed report that identifies all potential environmental impacts of a project – is prepared for potential public transportation projects.

TxDOT will conduct EIS studies for the SH 35 corridor beginning with the segment from Bellfort Road in Harris County to FM 1462 in Brazoria County. Information regarding this segment's EIS will be presented at the public meetings for the SH 35 corridor study and public input will be gathered, recorded, and taken into consideration as the study continues. A draft of the environmental document or Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be made available for public and agency review prior to a formal public hearing, where public comments will be recorded.

## STEERING COMMITTEE

TxDOT has established a Steering Committee to aid in the decision-making process and guide the technical development of the study. Committee members will meet periodically throughout the process to coordinate with their respective agencies, assess the study's progress, and provide oversight of the major activities associated with the study. Committee members include representatives from TxDOT, Houston-Galveston Area Council, Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transportation Agency, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Harris and Brazoria counties, and cities along the corridor – Houston, Brookside Village, Pearland, Alvin, and Angleton.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Regular, ongoing communication with area officials and members of the community is an essential part of the study process. The comprehensive public involvement plan includes:

**Advisory Committee.** Composed of representatives from area cities, economic development associations, civic clubs, and other local stakeholders, this committee will meet periodically throughout the course of the study to give the project team specific input and guidance regarding the area's needs.

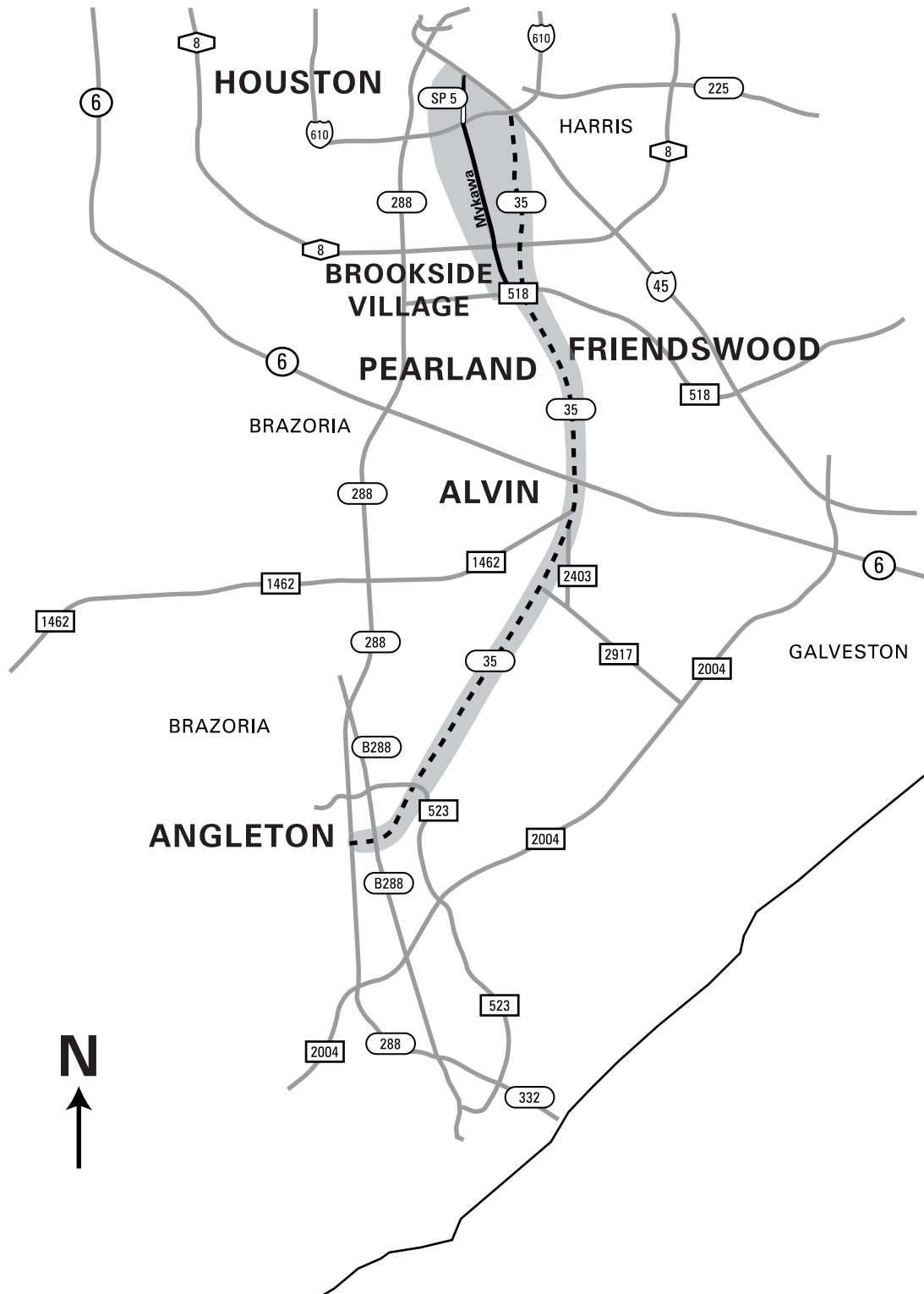
**Public Meetings.** A series of three public meetings rounds – each conducted in workshop format and held at two locations within the study area – will be held to update you on the study's progress and provide a forum for your comments and concerns. Attendees will be able to engage in informal discussions with consultant team members, view project information, and provide valuable feedback for the study. A public hearing (held in one location) will be conducted to receive formal comments on the alternatives once they have been determined. The public meetings are anticipated to be held as follows:

- **January 13-14, 2004** – Topic: Study Purpose, Process and Objectives (See back panel for details)
- **Spring 2004 Public Meetings** – Topic: Development of Preliminary Alternatives
- **Fall 2004 Public Hearing** – Topic: Presentation of Alternatives
- **Winter 2004/2005 Public Meetings** – Topic: Recommendation of Preferred Alternative

**Newsletters.** Three newsletters will be mailed during the course of the study to update you on the project and provide notification for upcoming public meetings. The final newsletter will contain a summary of the study's results.

**Written Comments.** Written comments are welcome and encouraged at any time during the study. You may submit comments at public meetings or via mail to: Mr. Pat Henry, P.E., Director of Project Development, TxDOT, P.O. Box 1386, Houston, Texas 77251-1386.

**Website.** At [www.dot.state.tx.us](http://www.dot.state.tx.us), look for SH 35 under Transportation Studies to view the latest newsletter and get up-to-date information on public meeting schedules and locations.



## SH 35 Corridor Study Area

(From IH 45 to SH 288)



## UPCOMING MEETINGS

We encourage your attendance at this first round of public meetings regarding the SH 35 Major Corridor Feasibility Study. These meetings will also serve as the Public Scoping Meetings for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) TxDOT is currently preparing for the segment of SH 35 from Bellfort Road in Harris County to FM 1462 in Brazoria County.

The meetings will be conducted in open house format and the public is invited to attend any time between the hours posted below. Attendees will be able to review large-scale maps and other exhibits at their leisure and engage in informal discussions with TxDOT and consultant team representatives. For your convenience, there will be two different meeting locations and dates:

**Tuesday, January 13, 6-8 p.m.**

Alvin Community College  
Nolan Ryan Center  
2925 South Bypass 35  
Alvin, Texas 77511

**Wednesday, January 14, 6-8 p.m.**

Hilton Houston-Hobby Airport  
8181 Airport Boulevard  
Houston, Texas 77061

The meetings are being held in handicap accessible locations and will be conducted in English. Persons with special communication or physical accommodation needs should contact TxDOT's public affairs office at 713/802-5072 at least 48 hours prior to the meetings. Reasonable accommodations will be made to meet these needs. Written comments may be submitted via mail to Mr. Pat Henry, P.E., Director of Project Development, TxDOT, P.O. Box 1386, Houston, Texas 77251-1386.



c/o The Lentz Group  
2600 Citadel Plaza Drive  
Suite 115  
Houston, Texas 77008

PRSRT STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
HOUSTON TX  
PERMIT NO  
11179